

REMARKS

Claim 6 has been amended and Claims 2-5, 8 and 10-15 are withdrawn. Claims 1, 6, 7, 9 and 16-20, as amended, remain subject to examination in the application

Claim 6 has been amended to change the original dependency upon a withdrawn claim. No new matter is added by the amendment to the claims.

In the Office Action dated September 12, 2003, Paper No. 9, the Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the U.S. Patent No. 5,293,911 issued to Akeel in view of the U.S. Patent No. 6,039,092 issued to Muscara. The Examiner stated that the patent to Akeel discloses a voltage block and a color change apparatus for a paint bell applicator comprising:

bell applicator 10 having a paint receptacle 14 and being movable to and from a docking position (Column 5, line 20);

a paint canister 12 in the bell applicator connected to the paint receptacle;

a paint filling station; and

paint injector 19 attached the filling station, the injector 19 being adapted to be connected to a different color paint (Col. 8, lines 24-25), the filling station being actuable to move the paint injector selectively to the docking position for engagement with the paint receptacle for filling the paint canister with paint.

The Examiner further stated that the Akeel patent does not disclose at least two paint injectors. According to the Examiner, the Muscara patent teaches a liquid filling apparatus comprising a conveyer 2 on which a plurality of containers are placed to be filled with the liquid and when each container is filled, the container is moved away from the filling device via movement of the conveyer. In the opinion of the Examiner, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the device of the Akeel patent by incorporating at least two paint injectors as taught by the Muscara patent in order to increase the number of different paints for spraying. Regarding Claim 6, the Examiner stated that it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art.

The Akeel patent shows a paint drop cluster 19 having different color drops 20, 20'. Each color drop is mounted to a fixed structure by a pair of supports 118 (Col. 7, lines 15-38). Thus,

the robot wrist 16 is moved to the location of the selected paint drop 20, 20' to allow the check valve 18 and the cylinder 20 to straddle the paint drop. Then the wrist 16 is moved to engage the check valve 16 with the paint drop (Col. 7, lines 39-44) in order to receive paint.

Thus, the Akeel paint drops 20, 20' do not move to a docking position of the robot as do the paint injectors defined by Applicants' Claims 1 and 6.

The Muscara patent discloses a paint filling apparatus having a fixed pair of filling valves and nozzles 4 that introduce paint into a corresponding pair of containers when the containers are moved by a conveyor to a filling station. Although the connection of the filling valves and nozzles 4 to a paint source is not described, it appears from Fig. 1 and the description of the relay 20 (Col. 4, lines 1-4) that the same paint is supplied to both nozzles through a common manifold and the filling valves are always actuated simultaneously.

In contrast, each of the paint injectors defined by Applicants' Claims 1 and 6 is adapted to be connected to a different color paint, and each of the injectors is selectively moveable to the docking position. Thus, the Muscara patent does not show or suggest the claimed elements missing from the Akeel patent.

There is no combination of the Akeel patent and the Muscara patent that includes the claimed combination of a paint receptacle being moving to a docking station and at least two paint injectors, adapted to be connected to different paint colors, each selectively movable to the docking station for engagement with the paint receptacle.

The Examiner objected to Claims 7 and 9 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants believe that Claims 7 and 9 depend from an allowable claim.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's statement of allowance for Claims 16-20.

The Examiner stated that the prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicants' disclosure. The Examiner cited: the U.S. Patent No. 3,949,791 issued to Vadas; the U.S. Patent No. 3,831,850 issued to Hunter; the U.S. Patent No. 5,143,294 issued to Lintvedt; and the U.S. Patent No. 3,041,805 issued to Waldrum. Applicants have reviewed these references and found them to be no more pertinent than prior art relied upon by the Examiner in his rejections.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the above arguments, Applicants believe that the claims of record now define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.